

Mission Statement

The mission of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women across Massachusetts. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women throughout their lives.

The Commission is empowered to:

- Study, review and report on the status of women in the Commonwealth;
- Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women;
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women;
- Identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government, including boards and commissions;
- Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women's organizations in the state.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is an independent state agency consisting of 19 appointed Commissioners.

Commissioners

Marianne Fleckner, Chair
Elaine Guiney, Vice-Chair
Jo Anne Thompson, Secretary
Kathleen A. Casavant, Treasurer
Minosca Alcántara
Jennifer C. Braceras
Donna Finneran
Barbara Gomes-Beach
Mary Clare Higgins
Frances X. Hogan
Susan K. Howards
Helen Jackson
Mary Reardon Johnson
Dianne Luby
Roseanna Means
Angela Menino
Nilka I. Alvarez-Rodriguez
Susana Segat
Kateri Walsh

Staff

Priscilla Golding, Executive Director
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Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

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Programs and Accomplishments

Priority Issues

The Commission chooses priority issues to guide their work for a particular year. The selection of the year's issues is based on testimony at public hearings and constituent and Commissioner input. The two issues taken on by MCSW for 2002 are child care and violence against women.

Public Hearings

The Commission holds four public hearings per calendar year. The purpose of the public hearings is to listen to the voices of women and girls in various parts of the Commonwealth. At the hearings women and girls testify about the status of their lives in Massachusetts.

After each public hearing, MCSW produces a summary report of the testimony. These reports are distributed to raise awareness regarding concerns of women and girls, as well as to gain support from the State Legislature and local communities in addressing these issues. A copy of each report is sent to the Commission's appointing authorities, hearing participants, and local legislators. The reports are posted on the MCSW Web site and can be easily viewed or downloaded. Hard copies of the reports may also be requested from the MCSW office.

Helping to Create Commissions for Women

One of MCSW's goals is to encourage and help develop local women's commissions in every region of the Commonwealth. Communities can contact MCSW for assistance in setting up a commission.

Legislative Endorsements

Our Legislative Subcommittee oversees the Commission's endorsement of legislation. The Subcommittee also seeks out legislation that falls under the full Commission's priorities.

When making decisions on endorsement, the Legislative Subcommittee carefully examines both sides of a bill, as well as looks to the testimonies presented at the public hearings hosted by the Commission. It is MCSW's goal to eventually write and/or sponsor our own legislation.

Internship Program

Internship opportunities are often available. The Commission values student interns because of their enthusiasm and hard work. Our interns are assigned special and interesting projects based on current Commission priorities.

Monthly Meetings

The Commission meets monthly, usually on the fourth Wednesday of each month (except July and August). All Commissioner meetings are open to the public. Check the MCSW Web site's Upcoming Events to confirm the time and place. If you plan to attend one of the Commission meetings, it is best to call the office at 617-626-6520 the day before the meeting, to RSVP in case of last-minute meeting changes.

Resources

Clearinghouse

The Commission has a clearinghouse of files containing information about organizations and agencies that focus on issues relevant to women and girls. Because MCSW does not provide direct services, when you contact our office with a question or inquiry, the staff will access the appropriate information in our clearinghouse and refer you to an organization that may serve your particular need or answer your question. Please feel free to contact the MCSW office for more information.

Web site

Another way to access information contained in the clearinghouse is to visit MCSW's Web site (www.mass.gov/women). The following guides are available online: Child Care and Children's Resources; Community Action Agencies; Fuel, Housing, and Food Assistance Resources; Health/Medical Assistance Resources; Legal Services; and Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Resources. The Web site also contains a calendar of events and current information about MCSW and our work.



www.mass.gov/women